

FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE
January 26, 2015

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Embodied Memories of Africa

Upcoming lecture explores ancient echoes in Gullah culture

The power of tradition in Gullah culture will be the subject of an upcoming lecture at the Georgetown Library at 405 Cleland Street in Georgetown, SC, on Sunday, February 8th, from 2:30 to 4:00 p.m.

In a program entitled *Embodied Memories of Africa: Music, Song and Dance of the Gullah-Geechee People of the United States*, Dr. Birgitta Johnson of the University of South Carolina (USC) will explore the high occurrence of African retentions or “survivals” among the languages, the labor skills, crafts, art, and religion still practiced by Gullah-Geechee people in the Southeast coastal areas of the United States.

“We’ll engage one of the most vibrant and visible aspects of Gullah-Geechee culture still practiced today,” Johnson said. “The music, songs, and dance of the Gullah-Geechee not only represent the expressive arts of the culture but they embody the power of memory, tradition, and cultural aesthetics to endure across the passage of time and space, regardless of social conditions and oppression.”

Dr. Johnson will provide an ethnomusicological overview of the Afro-American musical aesthetics that Gullah-Geechee music-cultures exemplify in sight, sound, and sense. The discussion will also reflect upon how music has sustained communities and represented Gullah-Geechee identity in various mediums such as live performances, rituals, re-enactments, recordings, film, and out-reach programming by culture-bearers and scholars dedicated to preserving and nourishing Gullah-Geechee traditions into the 21st century.

This is the fourth lecture in the library’s *Out of the Ricefields* grant series, and also features a display of Lowcountry artwork and delicious Gullah-inspired appetizers. These programs are made possible by a major grant from the Humanities Council SC, a state program of the National Endowment for the Humanities. Its mission is to enrich the cultural and intellectual lives of South Carolinians. For more information on *Out of the Rice Fields*, please contact the Georgetown County Library at (843) 545-3300.